

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6-14, and 17-19 are pending in the present application. Claims 4, 5, 15, 16, and 20-43 were previously cancelled. Claims 1 and 13 have been amended herein. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9-14, 17, and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as assertedly being unpatentable over Matsumoto, *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,455,894 B1, hereinafter “Matsumoto”) in view of Paton, *et al.* (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0111021 A1, hereinafter “Paton”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite at least one of the distinguishing features of an embodiment of the present invention, namely, “a shallow trench isolation extends under an entire width of a first dummy silicide structure of the at least one dummy silicide structure.” The cited references fail to teach or suggest this limitation, and accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Claim 13 has been amended to recite at least one of the distinguishing features of the present invention, namely, “the dielectric layer being a separate layer from the isolation region and being interposed between the silicide layer and the isolation region.” The cited references fail to disclose this limitation, and accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 13 be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, and 6-12 depend from claim 1 and add further limitations, and claims 14 and 17-19 depend from claim 13 and add further limitations. It is respectfully

submitted that these dependent claims are allowable by reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for adding new limitations.

Claims 1, 8, 13, and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as assertedly being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of Nakamura (U.S. Patent No. 5,739,574, hereinafter “Nakamura”). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants reiterate that the rejections of, apparently, claims 1, 8, 13, and 19 are confusing. For example, the Office Action merely asserted in paragraph 2 that claim 1 was obvious over Matsumoto in view of Nakamura, but failed to provide any support or motivation. The Office Action’s rejection of claim 13 appears to be incomplete as well.

Nevertheless, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1 and 13 are patentable for at least similar reasons as those discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that these rejections of claims 1 and 13 be withdrawn.

Claims 8 and 19 depend from and further limit claims 1 and 13, respectively. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are allowable by reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for adding new limitations.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that this response complies with 37 C.F.R. § 1.114. Applicants further submit that the claims are in condition for allowance. No new matter has been added by this amendment. If the Examiner should have any questions, please contact Applicants' attorney at the number listed below. In the event that the enclosed fees are insufficient, please charge any additional fees required to keep this application pending, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1065.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

/Roger C. Knapp/
Roger C. Knapp
Reg. No. 46,836
Attorney for Applicants

SLATER & MATSIL, L.L.P.
17950 Preston Rd., Suite 1000
Dallas, TX 75252
Tel: 972-732-1001
Fax: 972-732-9218